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Work of the Centre for International Crime Prevention

Projects involving international technical assistance and training in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 1999/24 of 28 July 1999. It contains information received from Member States and relevant international organizations and other entities on their projects involving international technical assistance and training in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice. It also contains information on the viability and usefulness of expanding globally a centralized clearing house database for international training and technical assistance projects in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice, such as the one piloted for central and eastern Europe by the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated to the United Nations. The number of responses received could be regarded as adequate, but their contents are inadequate for the purpose of considering the establishment of an information clearing house for international projects involving technical assistance and training in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice. The main conclusions of the report are that the establishment of a centralized clearing house for such projects would not achieve the coordination objective intended, as the level of responses and usage would prove too low, unless significant resources were invested to sustain such an effort. In view of this, the report concludes that an attempt to establish such an effort as an ongoing and standing activity would amount to a misallocation of resources.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 1999/24 of 28 July 1999, in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to collect information from Member States and relevant international organizations and other entities on their projects involving international technical assistance and training in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice; recommended that he explore the possibility of expanding that initiative as a standing activity; and requested him to report on the functioning of the pilot phase to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its tenth session.

2. The process of gathering information on projects by Member States and relevant international organizations and other entities on their projects involving international technical assistance and training in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice was conducted by means of a questionnaire developed and administered by the Centre for International Crime Prevention pursuant to resolution 1999/24. The Centre consulted with the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated to the United Nations (HEUNI), on the operation of its regional database for eastern and central Europe on crime prevention and criminal justice projects and its related data-gathering instrument, which was used as point of reference for the development of the questionnaire administered by the Centre.

3. The report summarizes and analyses the information received, focusing on its usefulness as an instrument for the possible coordination of international technical assistance and training in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice. It also contains an assessment of the feasibility and possible usefulness of expanding globally and/or promoting the establishment of regional centralized clearing house databases for international training and technical assistance projects in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice. The report also contains a chapter prepared by HEUNI reporting on the functioning of the pilot HEUNI Database on International Projects in Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in Central and Eastern Europe, established pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/12 of 24 July 1995 to assist Member States in coordinating their international assistance.

II. Analysis of the responses

4. The Centre for International Crime Prevention received 38 replies to the questionnaire distributed pursuant to resolution 1999/24, broken down as follows: 11 responses (29 per cent) from Member States, 10 (29 per cent) from United Nations entities and specialized agencies, 2 (5 per cent) from non-United Nations intergovernmental organizations, 4 (11 per cent) from members of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network and 10 (26 per cent) from non-governmental organizations and other entities. Of the 38 replies received, one, from a Member State, reported having appointed a focal point for international technical cooperation projects in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice and 9 respondents (24 per cent), 8 of which were Member States, indicated that they did use the instrument distributed by the Centre.

5. While the level of response can be considered acceptable, an analysis of the contents of the responses provides the following scenario. Of the 38 responses received, 4 (11 per cent) could be described as partly relevant, meaning that they dealt with one to three items covered in the instrument, and 8 (22 per cent) could be considered relevant, meaning that each individual response dealt with three or more items contained in the instrument. However, the fact that only nine responses indicated that their authors used the instrument developed by the Centre renders those responses of limited value for analytical, comparative or statistical purposes, or for the purpose of establishing a consolidated database for coordination of and information on international technical cooperation projects in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice. Their value is further reduced by the fact that the data provided have not undergone a process of validation and the responses have been taken at face value and without any supporting documentation.

6. One respondent out of the 38, a Member State, reported having allocated a specific budget for technical assistance in the field. Together with a further respondent, they described themselves as "donors". A

total of five respondents can be described as recipients of international technical cooperation in the crime prevention and criminal justice fields. One Member State reported having neither received nor provided any international technical cooperation in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice, while a further four Member States did not provide an answer on this item.

7. The 11 responses received from Member States were distributed as follows in terms of geographical regions: 2 from Africa, 4 from Europe, 2 from the Latin American and Caribbean region and 2 from the region of Asia and the Pacific.

8. One country in Europe reported having received assistance from the European Union and the Council of Europe in the areas of combating organized crime and the fight against corruption. The target groups or areas of the project included the courts, customs, police and security, prosecution and witness protection. The form of the assistance included study tours and training and the fields covered were corruption, crime detection, crime prevention strategies, criminal information collection and analysis, customs, drug-related crime, economic crime, evidence-gathering, extradition, financial investigation, institutional structures, institution-building, investigation materials, international standards and human rights, juvenile justice, money-laundering investigations, mutual legal assistance and organized crime. The same country reported having received assistance from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for a juvenile justice programme aimed at the specialization of the courts and the Bar. Its target groups were courts and lawyers and the forms of assistance included the provision of expertise and study tours and training covering the fields of corrections and rehabilitation, court procedures, criminal and procedural legislation, international standards and human rights. Another juvenile justice project, also funded by UNDP, aimed at the reorganization of the police. It targeted police and security, research, strategic planning and victim assistance. The forms of assistance included the provision of equipment, expertise, study tours and training. A completed UNDP-funded project had supported the establishment of a centre for crime prevention, its forms of assistance including the provision of equipment, expertise, study tours and training. A further project in the juvenile justice area, funded by UNDP, had as its target groups/areas courts, employment of inmates, lawyers, police and security, prison staff training, prisons and aftercare, prosecution, research, strategic planning and victim assistance and the forms of assistance included the provision of equipment, expertise, study tours and training. A UNDP project concluded in 1999 had addressed the development of a conceptual and legal base for juvenile and criminal justice reform.

9. One country in Latin America reported that it had received technical cooperation in crime prevention and criminal justice through three projects. One project concerned mitigating economic difficulties related to the process of structural economic adjustment, the second the penitentiary reform programme and the third strengthening the work of the Commission of Pardons and commutation of sentences for persons sentenced for crimes of terrorism and treason. The donors were reported to be Canada and the Japanese International Cooperation Agency. The target groups/areas were prison staff training and prisons and aftercare and assistance related to the provision of training and equipment, while the fields covered were international cooperation and terrorism.

10. A country in central Europe reported that data on international technical cooperation in crime prevention and criminal justice was not systematically maintained. However, it reported that technical cooperation had been received from Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, and from the United Nations, the European Union and the Council of Europe. Project target groups/areas were customs, police and security and strategic planning and assistance had been in the form of provision of equipment, expertise, study tours and training. The fields of project assistance were border control, community policing, computer hardware and software, corruption, crime detection, crime prevention strategies, criminal information collection and analysis, criminal investigations, criminalistics and forensics, cross-border police cooperation, customs, development/implementation of prevention programmes, domestic violence, drug-related crime, economic crime, enforcement practices, ethnic and hate crimes, financial investigations, illegal trafficking, international standards and human rights, juvenile crime, juvenile justice, legal education and public education, legislation, legislative drafting and implementation, literature, management, management

training, money-laundering investigation, organized crime, prevention, sexual crime, terrorism and trafficking in persons.

11. One western European country reported having provided international technical cooperation in crime prevention and criminal justice to some 20 projects per annum. However, insufficient time between the receipt of the questionnaire and the deadline for the provision of data to the Centre prevented that country from providing more detailed information on the projects.

12. One country in Central America reported receiving assistance from the Danish Centre for Human Rights, whose assistance had made possible the development of a strategic plan for the Ministry of the Interior and a programme to improve the security of citizens. The Inter-American Development Bank had funded a programme of technical assistance directed at the Ministry of the Interior, the judicature, the Institute of Public Penal Defence and the Office of the Public Prosecutor. In addition, through the strategic plan of the Ministry of the Interior, assistance had been provided to the prison system, in particular for the establishment, in 2002, of a school for penitentiary studies. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had provided training in human rights for the National Civil Police and United Nations verification mission in the country had supported the programme for the strengthening of the National Civil Police. The response did not provide specific information on target groups or types or fields of assistance.

13. One country in Asia, a provider of international cooperation in crime prevention and criminal justice, was the only respondent that reported having a specific budget for international assistance in the field, from which it had funded 13 projects in 2000. The areas covered by the projects were crime prevention (treatment of offenders), administration of criminal justice, a seminar in crime prevention for senior government officials, corruption control in criminal justice, juvenile delinquent treatment systems, a special seminar for senior criminal officials, community policing, a seminar on firearms control, transfer of criminal identification techniques, a seminar on organized crime in the Asian region, a seminar on international terrorism and technical measures against cyber-crime. All the projects were of short duration—five projects had had a duration of between three weeks and two months—and had taken the form of provision of expertise, study tours and training. The other seven projects had taken the form of seminars. None of the projects had entailed the provision of equipment. The following regions were listed as recipients of cooperation from the country in question: Africa, Asia and the Pacific, eastern Europe and Latin America. A reply was also received from the Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, which provided identical information on 6 of the 13 projects reported by the Asian country.

14. One country in Africa indicated that it had received no international assistance in crime prevention and criminal justice but would welcome such assistance and training in any of the fields covered in the questionnaire.

15. A country in Asia reported that its police had received assistance from counterpart agencies in Australia and Japan and from the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention of the Secretariat to cover participation at international conferences, seminars and workshops in crime prevention and criminal justice. It also reported having received international technical assistance through five United Nations International Drug Control Programme regional projects in the field of drug control. Those projects had covered the development of drug control operational procedures, the gathering and exchanging of drug law enforcement information, the enhancement of drug law enforcement training, the strengthening of judicial and prosecutorial capacity and the development of cross-border law enforcement in east Asia.

16. One country in central Europe reported that it had received no international technical cooperation in the crime prevention and criminal justice fields.

17. In summary, there were 11 responses to the questionnaire that could be regarded as either relevant or partly relevant. Among those, 24 projects were listed. Sixteen projects, or 67 per cent of the projects, cited police and security as the target of the projects, followed by 10 citations for strategic planning (42 per cent) and the courts with 8 mentions (33 per cent). The most frequently cited form of assistance was the provision of expertise and the most often cited fields of project assistance were international cooperation and international standards and human rights, with 13 of

the 24 projects targeting those fields, followed by criminal information collection and analysis and criminal investigations, with 11 citations each. Nine projects dealt with organized crime, four targeted corruption and a further four trafficking in persons. None of the projects covered any of the following available fields: arrest techniques, environmental crime, logistics, medical and health issues, medical equipment, tactical information systems or transport vehicles. The table below provides a detailed breakdown of the project coverage:

	Number of projects	*Percentage*
Project target group(s)/area(s)		
Courts	8	33
Customs	5	21
Employment of inmates	1	4
Lawyers	4	17
Police and security	16	67
Prison staff training	6	25
Prisons and aftercare	7	29
Prosecution	7	29
Research	4	17
Strategic planning	10	42
Victim assistance	6	25
Witness protection	4	17
Other	1	4
Forms of assistance		
Equipment	5	21
Expertise	14	58
Study tours	12	50
Training	14	58
Other	6	25
Field(s) of project assistance		
Archival information/storage systems	2	8
Arrest techniques	-	-
Border control	1	4
Buildings and construction	1	4
Case management/case management systems	7	29
Communications	2	8
Community policing	6	25
Computer hardware and software	5	21
Computer training	2	8
Corrections and rehabilitation	7	29
Corruption	8	33
Court procedures	7	29
Crime detection	10	42
Crime prevention strategies	11	46
Criminal and procedural legislation	9	38
Criminal information collection and analysis	11	46
Criminal investigations	11	46

	Number of projects	*Percentage*
Criminalistics and forensics	5	21
Cross-border police cooperation	9	38
Customs	2	8
Data management and statistics	4	17
Development/implementation of corrections/rehabilitation	6	25
Development/implementation of prevention programmes	9	38
Development of information networks	5	21
Domestic violence	2	8
Drug-related crime	8	33
Economic crime	6	25
Enforcement practices	6	25
Environmental crime	-	-
Ethnic and hate crimes	1	4
Evidence-gathering	6	25
Extradition	5	21
Financial investigations	7	29
Formulation of criminal policy	6	25
Illegal trafficking	6	25
Information analysis systems	8	33
Institutional structures	9	38
Institution-building	9	38
International cooperation	13	54
International standards and human rights	13	54
Interviewing and interrogation techniques	3	13
Investigation materials	5	21
Judicial areas	7	29
Juvenile crime	9	38
Juvenile justice	9	38
Legal education and public education	3	13
Legislation	8	33
Legislative drafting and implementation	3	13
Literature	4	17
Logistics	-	-
Management	2	8
Management training	7	29
Medical and health issues	-	-
Medical equipment	-	-
Money-laundering investigation	8	33
Mutual legal assistance	7	29
Need assessment and programming new fields of assistance	3	13
Non-custodial sanctions	5	21
Operational enforcement activities	3	13
Organized crime	9	38
Pre-trial procedures	7	29
Prevention	9	38
Property crime	5	21

	Number of projects	*Percentage*
Research and analysis	5	21
Search techniques	2	8
Sentencing	5	21
Sexual crime	3	13
Smuggling of migrants	2	8
Statistical systems	3	13
Study tours	10	42
Surveillance and surveillance equipment	1	4
Tactical information systems	-	-
Terrorism	5	21
Trafficking in persons	4	17
Train the trainers	1	4
Transport vehicles	-	-
Violent crime	4	17
Vocational training	1	4
Other	-	-

18. Several United Nations entities reported conducting activities that either related to or had an impact on crime prevention and criminal justice. The Department for Disarmament Affairs of the Secretariat reported that its weapons collection and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes aimed at reducing the number of and access to such weapons in a given community had had a positive income not only on crime, but also on political and social stability, peace and development. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) reported that in 1998 it had established a directory of United Nations projects and activities on trafficking in women and children in Asia and that all United Nations agencies had contributed to the directory, which contained summary information on projects and activities. The directory was being updated and a copy would be provided to the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention. ESCAP also reported that in 1997-1998 it had implemented a project on the community-based approach to the prevention of juvenile delinquency. The project provided assistance to the following countries: Bangladesh, Indonesia, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam. The country reports findings had been published in a 1999 ESCAP publication entitled "Community-based Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency". In 2000, ESCAP had sponsored a regional seminar on assessment and classification of adult offenders and juvenile delinquents. The seminar had highlighted the need to strengthen and develop appropriate treatment techniques and rehabilitation programmes in line with United Nations standards and norms and the need to formulate guidelines based on standard classification systems by type of offence or delinquent behaviour and to assess behavioural tendencies as determined by personality traits and the offender's social background. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights reported conducting a wide range of activities aimed at strengthening human rights in the administration of justice, noting that further information was contained in a forthcoming analytical report of the High Commissioner to the Commission of Human Rights on the implementation of the programme of advisory services and technical cooperation in the field of human rights (E/CN.4/2001/104). The Office reported being involved in a "right to security" project in Nicaragua, implemented in cooperation with the Latin American Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat reported on its activities to enhance the ethical conduct of public officials and to prevent corruption. The Department had supported the development of a charter for public service in Africa and was implementing a project to assist Governments in Africa to improve the ethics and conduct of the public sector. It also held regular workshops to

promote compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex). Together with UNDP and several donors, the Department was involved in the implementation of a programme component to support the implementation in west Africa of the Moratorium of the Economic Community of West African States on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons.

19. Among non-United Nations intergovernmental entities, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) reported that the OSCE mission in Kosovo had been entrusted with the training of a new Kosovo police service within the Kosovo police service schools and that 3,400 people had completed the police training. It also reported that its Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights was implementing projects relevant to crime prevention and criminal justice, principally in the fields of rule of law, migration/freedom of movement and against trafficking in persons. The rule of law programme focuses on improving the functioning of the criminal justice system to prevent the violation of human rights and to introduce greater transparency in the administration of justice. Focus areas are prison reform, training of judges, defence lawyers and prosecutors in the implementation of international standards, police training on human rights, prevention of torture and the review of criminal legislation, including its compliance with international standards. OSCE implements a project, with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), for the development of migration legislation in the newly independent States. The project is intended to stimulate cross-border cooperation in the legislative field in the countries of the former Soviet Union at the regional and subregional levels. OSCE reported that the Stability Pact Task Force on Trafficking in Human Beings promoted regional cooperation, maintained an inventory of anti-trafficking activities in the Balkans, coordinated anti-trafficking work by various international agencies and national actors and lobbied for political support and political commitment. It had also proposed setting up a regional clearing house for activities against trafficking. Under the Stability Pact, the Council of Europe was coordinating legislative review and reform. The Council of Europe had proposed a project on criminal law reform on trafficking in human beings in south-eastern Europe for 2001. Other projects by the Office were the Stability Pact legislative review project, whose aim was to determine relevant legal materials for legislative reform aimed at prosecuting trafficking and protecting victims, as well as drafting guidelines outlining what should be addressed when proposing legislative reform. In Kosovo, a project for legal aid for victims of trafficking focused on training victims' assistants and lawyers in advocacy, appeal, legal argumentation and defence. In coordination with IOM, OSCE was assisting the Government of Ukraine in its anti-trafficking initiatives, including a comparative legislative review being undertaken with a view to making improvements in the new draft criminal code relevant to combating trafficking.

20. Among non-governmental organizations, the following provided information that may be considered of note. Victim Support (UK) reported that the European Forum for Victim Services had set up a committee to look at the specific issue of training for people working with victims of crime. While the committee had not yet met, it was hoped that it would develop some training standards and a database of materials for both professionals and volunteers in victims' services. Europe 2000 (Belgium), a non-governmental organization holding consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, forwarded a copy of its report covering its various conferences between 1989 and 2000. The Asia Crime Prevention Foundation (ACPF), a non-governmental organization holding consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, reported that in 2001-2002 it planned to organize three working groups on corruption, alleviation of extreme poverty and follow-up to the eighth ACPF World Conference. It also reported that it maintained a web site (www.acpf.org) that contained information to assist criminal justice practitioners. The African Peace Network (Ghana), another non-governmental organization holding consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, reported on various advocacy activities in crime prevention, including educational visits to prisons and schools. The American Correctional Association (USA) reported involvement in all facets of corrections, including adult and juvenile services, community correction, probation and parole and jails.

21. The International Institute of Higher Studies in Criminal Sciences, a member of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme network, reported on a series of seminars, conferences

and training events that it had organized in 1999-2000. Those events covered, inter alia, the issue of lay participation in criminal trials in the twenty-first century, strengthening investigative techniques against organized crime, a series of training courses for Albanian and Egyptian justice officials on international cooperation in criminal matters, a colloquium of young penalists on international criminal law, a seminar of Arab experts on the problem of terrorism and the application of the Arab Convention against Terrorism and a workshop on organized crime in Europe. In the context of the Preparatory Commission for the International Criminal Court, the Institute had conducted informal meetings on rules of procedure and evidence and elements of crime, as well as briefing sessions for delegates on ratification and implementation of the Convention.

22. The Centre for International Crime Prevention had supported projects with a total budget value of $4,040,694 in 2000. A list of the projects and detailed substantive information was contained in the report of the Executive Director on the work of the Centre (E/CN.15/2001/9). Technical cooperation activities focused on combating organized crime, trafficking in human beings and corruption. Considerable progress had been made in 2000 in initiating and advancing the implementation of concrete projects at the regional and country levels within the framework of the Centre's global programmes on the thematic fields mentioned. Ad hoc projects in juvenile justice and crime prevention had also been supported. In Lebanon, a project to strengthen the legislative and institutional capacity for juvenile justice was being implemented. A project proposal on juvenile justice for Egypt had been drawn up. The Centre had also assisted the South Africa Police Service to formulate two pilot projects, with UNDP, to promote crime prevention in schools and the community and in rural areas. The Centre had also initiated preparatory work on a new programme activity in crime prevention to promote a culture of lawfulness and to assist national and local governments in protecting vulnerable groups at risk of being recruited by organized crime, in particular through educational and civic programmes. Synergies between the Centre and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, the two pillars of the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, continued to be sought. Joint missions had been undertaken with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, which included advisory, fact-finding and project formulation missions to the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Guatemala and west Africa.

III. Report of the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated to the United Nations, on the functioning of its Database on International Projects in Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in Central and Eastern Europe

A. Background

23. With the fundamental changes in central and eastern Europe around 1990, a number of Governments, individual agencies and organizations sought to provide assistance in the restructuring of the criminal justice system in the different countries. The flow of assistance was not without its problems. For example, at times there was considerable overlap among projects, which may have detracted from their effectiveness, and gaps were also present.

24. In early 1992, the (then) Helsinki Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations (HEUNI), began to gather information on international projects in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice directed to central and eastern Europe. On 11 and 12 February 1993, the (then) Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch of the Secretariat and HEUNI jointly organized an informal meeting of representatives of Member States, organizations and other entities involved in assisting crime prevention and criminal justice agencies and programmes in central and eastern Europe. At that meeting, an overall idea of a clearing house for such projects was launched and, in 1995, the HEUNI Database on International Projects in Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in Central and Eastern European Countries was established pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/12. The HEUNI database was also intended to serve as a pilot project for similar regional databases elsewhere. The experimental pilot phase of the project was financed by extrabudgetary funds provided by the Department of State of the United States of America.

B. Database design

25. The database was designed to assist Member States in planning and coordinating their international assistance in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice to countries with economies in transition in central and eastern Europe. The database was specially designed to assist policy makers in improved allocation of resources, the identification of overlaps and gaps in assistance and the identification of opportunities for collaborative action and potential partners.

26. The database was developed in cooperation with other organizations, such as the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and UNDP. At first, the software used by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme database was tailored for the Institute's purposes to ensure complementary coverage of the field and to avoid multiplicity of data-collecting efforts.

27. The HEUNI database provides interested Governments and other entities with information on international assistance, classified by area of interest, by form of assistance, by donor country and by beneficiary country.

28. The use of the tailored United Nations International Drug Control Programme software involved some practical difficulties, arising mainly from the different ways projects were described. Accordingly, the format and software of the HEUNI database were changed, in cooperation with the National Institute of Justice of the United States and the Rule of Law Foundation, to respond to the specific needs of HEUNI.

29. Furthermore, it became evident that the database would serve users better in electronic format and, accordingly, changes were made such that the HEUNI database has been available, with certain limitations, free of charge to all Internet users since early 1998. At all times, however, it has been clearly indicated that information can also be given directly to the database manager and in any format suitable for the provider of information, be it in writing or in electronic format.

C. Implementation of the experimental phase

30. The establishment of the HEUNI database involved three components, collection of the data, processing of the data at HEUNI and dissemination of the data.

1. Collection of the data

31. During the first phase after the establishment of the database, an English-language questionnaire was sent to governmental and non-governmental agencies in all European and North American countries requesting information on their international projects that benefited at least one central and eastern European country in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice and that were in progress on or after 1 January 1995. In addition, HEUNI collected information directly from several agencies and organizations (such as UNDP, the Council of Europe and the Central and East European Law Initiative of the American Bar Association).

32. The response rate from the donor countries was deemed to be satisfactory. Various agencies in 12 countries (Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States) provided information. On the other hand, some major donors did not provide any information on their bilateral projects and these could therefore not be reflected in the database. Both the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and HEUNI sought to make clear that the two data-gathering exercises should be seen as complementary, but still one major donor country indicated as the reason for not supplying data to HEUNI the perceived overlap between the two databases. The response rate from the recipient countries was very low. HEUNI was able to identify only a few projects on the basis of the information received.

33. After the HEUNI database became available via the Internet, another major request for information was sent in May 1998 to 47 governmental agencies in 22 countries in Europe and North America as well as to 17 governmental and non-governmental organizations. Based on the previous experience on the reluctance of the recipients to respond, only donors were approached. They were encouraged to give information

in the form that would have been easiest for them to provide, such as in the form of already published work programmes, annual reports or available individual project descriptions. In that way, the data would also be more reliable, as the data to be entered could be taken from a clear project description instead of from what are often very brief or unclear responses to a questionnaire. Seven governmental agencies (from Belgium, Canada, Ireland, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States) and six organizations replied. Useful and processable information on projects was received from one agency and one organization.

2. Processing the data at HEUNI

34. By mid-1997, some 420 assistance entries had been entered into the HEUNI database, representing about two thirds of the projects noted in the responses received. Approximately one third of the potential entries remained unentered owing to the technical difficulties referred to and this led later to changes in the database format. On the basis of the second larger request, no entries were made.

3. Dissemination of the data

35. From the outset, HEUNI sought to publicize the availability to all interested Governments and entities of the information currently available free of charge through the Internet, with some restrictions concerning detailed financial and other data.

36. In October 1996, HEUNI circulated a brochure and a guide on the database, providing examples of the data available and inviting the addressees to provide further information on a regular basis. However, only a few updates were sent to HEUNI, although several positive expressions of interest were received. The Institute has informed donors on several different occasions about the database and invited them to use it, but has not received any new information nor updates in spite of its many efforts, nor has the database been used directly by any donor.

D. The need for a national focal point

37. Overall, it appears that problems with the coordination of international projects are not limited to the international level. Even within a country there is often no central focal point for collecting information on international projects in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice (or legal cooperation in general). Many projects are initiated and implemented by individual agencies or organizations and the ministry of justice or the ministry of foreign affairs, for example, is not necessarily aware of such projects.

38. Some countries, such as Germany, the Netherlands and the United States, have taken steps to improve national coordination. Their efforts are deserving of the attention of and possible replication by other donor countries.

39. In connection with the 1998 inquiry about projects, HEUNI sent out a questionnaire in order to obtain information on the existence of special sources of information within agencies or organizations, on the existence of central national focal points and on whether there was information on such sources elsewhere. Useful information on data sources, both electronic and stand-alone, was received from four agencies and two organizations. In addition, one Government expressed strong interest in the HEUNI database and indicated its interest in using it for a national focal point on information about assistance. However, the plan was never implemented.

E. Conclusions concerning the database

1. Availability of data

40. The response rate was satisfactory at first, although some major countries that are presumably involved in international cooperation did not provide data. Only a few responses were received from beneficiary agencies. More recently, interest in providing data has been less than satisfactory.

41. One conclusion is that the motivation to provide data to an outside database appears in general to be low. It may require extra work in gathering the information from different sources, perhaps modifying it and, in many cases, also translating it into a foreign language. Here, the question of an intra-agency database, whether electronic, stand-alone or non-computerized, could probably play a crucial role in facilitating the transferral of data.

42. The easy availability of information on concluded, ongoing or planned projects would accordingly enhance the need for and usefulness of a

national centralized focal point where decision makers could trace information without delay or difficulty and, accordingly, plan their projects to better respond to the needs. Furthermore, should that information be available in some form internationally, this would facilitate efforts in planning and implementing technical assistance in general.

43. For this reason, the HEUNI database was designed to provide contact information about other related sources and to allow linkage with other electronic databases. Consequently, information on a single project does not need to be moved from one database to another. Instead, access to the original source of information can be reached through one centralized point, the HEUNI database.

2. Quality of the data

44. The quality of the data provided was often poor: not all questions were answered and often very general information was provided that made the answers difficult to interpret. The poor quality was probably the result of several factors: the low motivation to respond, problems with the questionnaire format and difficulties in defining the parameters of international projects.

F. Further development

45. Experience with the preliminary phase was promising, although at times frustrating. Work on the database should, however, continue, although perhaps a different modus operandi should be sought. This could include, for instance, the tracing of information in related databases and sources of information with possible direct linkages from the HEUNI database, with no attempt to collect and copy detailed information from other sources. Possibilities of organizing national focal points for projects could also be explored.

IV. Conclusion

46. The overall experience reported above by HEUNI and the very limited number of responses received by the Centre for International Crime Prevention to the questionnaire on international technical cooperation in crime prevention and criminal justice suggest that the establishment of a centralized database is of very limited value and utility, in particular when one considers the overall quality and content of the responses.

47. The level of utilization and responses by Member States, United Nations and non-United Nations entities and non-governmental organizations strongly indicates that the collection of information on projects involving international technical assistance and training in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice and attempts to establish central clearing houses for such activities, while laudable as a concept or as an ideal, do not attract the support or interest of the various parties.

48. The very limited success of the HEUNI database, in terms of levels of response and utilization, is not a promising basis for the expansion of such enterprises in other regions. The poor result achieved by commendable effort, conducted by a well established and well endowed institution, must be gauged and considered in the context of the group of countries targeted by the database. The database was aimed at a group of countries that had relatively well developed administrative and political infrastructures, countries that in general terms were classified as high-income countries, where the availability of financial and human resources to support the provision of such information should not present a major problem. Despite this, the group of countries targeted by the HEUNI effort consistently failed to provide and update information or to make use of the resources available.

49. The above experience shows that attempts to expand, replicate and/or adapt such an enterprise in other regions of the world, where the target countries may have very limited resources at their disposal, would not constitute a promising initiative. Such efforts may be seen and construed as unnecessary and wasteful, since significant resources would have to be invested in the gathering of summary project information of limited value in itself, rather than in direct technical assistance activities to improve crime prevention and criminal justice.

50. Other organizations have attempted to implement donor technical assistance coordination mechanisms and information collection systems, such as the United Nations International Drug Control Programme's Caribbean Coordination Mechanism, funded as a long-running technical cooperation project. When analysing effectiveness in achieving coordination and impact in

relation to the investment made, the net results have to be regarded as questionable.

51. It is widely accepted that coordination and clearing houses for all technical cooperation, not just that in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice, are most effective at the national level in the recipient country. Consistent and sustained efforts by the United Nations system and other institutions, such as the World Bank, through various mechanisms, such as its Comprehensive Development Framework, the United Nations common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and country programmes have, so far, proved of limited value, though they may offer opportunities in the future. Few recipient countries have established effective focal coordination points for technical cooperation and the few that have done so have only been partially successful in moderating the competing interests of various ministries, departments and non-governmental agencies, many of which often compete for the same resources from the same limited pool of international technical assistance donors and providers.

52. In the case of technical assistance in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice, little evidence exists of coordination or the establishment of focal points at the national level for such type of assistance, notwithstanding the recommendation contained in resolution 1999/24 to that effect. As a point of interest, it should be noted that the only Member State responding in a positive manner to the question as to whether it had established such a focal point also stated that it was not a recipient of technical assistance in the related field.

53. Nonetheless, the establishment of such focal points at the national level is a desirable and positive development, as the Commission may wish to reiterate, provided that such an initiative is accompanied by the provision by the national authorities of the minimum required resources, the authority to collect information from the various actors active in the field in the country and the creation of an effective machinery for that purpose.

54. In relation to the possibility of expanding and sustaining the pilot database and collection of information on international assistance in crime prevention and criminal justice as a standing activity, the conclusion from the practical results so far achieved suggest that such an activity would be tantamount to a misallocation of the very limited regular resources available to the United Nations in this field. Were such an initiative to be financed with extrabudgetary funding, its sustainability could not be assured and, as already stated, the impact of such an investment could prove questionable.

55. Experience in the field of drug control would lend some support to the notion of establishing informal information exchanges and coordination mechanisms at the field level among representatives of recipient and donor countries as well as those of multilateral donors and providers of technical cooperation. Such initiatives have, in some cases, aided coordination, avoidance of duplication in technical assistance initiatives, contributing occasionally to achieving complementarity and joint initiatives. This has been the experience of the existing field-level information exchange mechanism for technical assistance in drug control, which operates only in selected countries where drug control is a significant issue. In future, an area that may offer some promise for coordination is the field-level-based United Nations Development Assistance Framework (see para. 51), which includes a provision for the establishment of inter-agency thematic groups at the field level for coordination, information exchange and possibly, at a later stage, joint inter-agency planning and programming.

56. In an age of decentralization and empowerment at the level closest to the intended beneficiaries, the notion of a centralized and/or regional clearing house should be discouraged, in particular when those centralizing efforts could be seen as espoused and promoted by the providers of the technical assistance. Such mechanisms could only be successful and sustainable if they emerged as an initiative of recipient countries at the national level. The Commission may therefore wish to reiterate its recommendation to Member States that they set up focal points and inform the Secretariat of their establishment. Depending on the reaction and response to such an initiative, the Secretariat could then be instructed to compile and make available a directory. Such an initiative, however, would have financial implications that the Commission would also have to consider.